

Message Text

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67

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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R 271143 Z APR 73 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 879
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
USDEL JEC PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 7380

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, PARM, PFOR, MAAR VS

SUBJECT: REACTION TO GVN PROPOSAL FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AND
NEWS OF POSSIBLE KISSINGER- THO MEETING

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. PRESS: ALL SAIGON DAILIES APRIL 27 GAVE HEADLINES AND LEAD
STORIES TO NEWS OF AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN'S DEPARTURE FOR PARIS TO
ARRANGE ANOTHER KISSINGER- THO MEETING AND TO NEWS THAT THE GVN
HAD PROPOSED A PRELIMINARY ACCORD FOR A FINAL POLITICAL SOLUTION
IN THE SOUTH. THE KISSINGER- THO STORIES WERE BASED ON WIRE
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SERVICE REPORTS OF OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE AND STATE DEPARTMENT

ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE APRIL 25. STORIES ON THE GVN'S PROPOSED AGREEMENT WERE FACTUAL ACCOUNTS OF FONMIN LAM'S APRIL 25 PRESS CONFERENCE; MOST PAPERS CARRIED THE FULL TEXT OF HIS FORMAL STATEMENT AND THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT. THE COMMUNISTS' REJECTION OF THE GVN PROPOSAL AND THEIR SIX- POINT COUNTERPROPOSAL WERE NOTED ONLY BRIEFLY. SOME PAPERS REPORTED THAT AN OFFICIAL GVN SPOKESMAN APRIL 26 CHARACTERIZED THE COMMUNIST COUNTERPROPOSAL AS " VAGUE" AND " INCOHERENT." STORIES ON THE KISSINGER- THO MEETING GENERALLY RECEIVED HEAVIER PLAY THAN THE LAM PRESS CONFERENCE, REFLECTING A WIDESPREAD ATTITUDE HERE THAT EVENTS OUTSIDE VIET- NAM AND OUTSIDE SOUTH VIETNAMESE CONTROL DETERMINE THE NATION'S FUTURE.

2. EDITORIALS: EDITORIAL REACTION TO THE NEWS OF US- DRV MEETINGS AND TO THE GVN PROPOSAL HAS THUS FAR BEEN VERY LIMITED. MILDLY OPPOSITION DAI DAN TOC SAID THAT WITH THE GVN'S NEW PROPOSAL " PEOPLE HAVE EVERY REASON TO THINK THAT, DESPITE A STILL COMPLEX SITUATION, THE BASIC POLITICAL PROVISIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT WILL BE FULFILLED." " IT IS FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT OTHER THORNY PROBLEMS, SUCH AS SETTING UP THE NCNRC, WILL BE SETTLED SOON." WITH UNCHARACTERISTIC OPTIMISM, OPPOSITION DIEN TIN SAID THAT " THERE ARE PROGRESSIVE SIGNS (IN THE SITUATION), BECAUSE THE DISCUSSIONS (BETWEEN THE GVN AND THE NLF) HAVE BECOME CONCRETE" AND ARE " NO LONGER PURELY ACADEMIC." TRUE TO FORM, EVER OPTIMISTIC BUT THEY TOOK THE LINE THAT " WHENEVER THERE IS A CONCRETE PROPOSAL, IT MUST BE TAKEN UNDER CONSIDERATION," AND THEREFORE THE GVN'S INITIATIVE WILL LEAD TO PROGRESS.

3. RADIO & TELEVISION: GVN RADIO AND TELEVISION HAVE REPORTED THE LAM PRESS CONFERENCE AND THE GVN'S PROPOSED AGREEMENT IN DETAIL. FACTUAL REPORTS OF US MOVES TO REOPEN TALKS WITH THE DRV HAVE GOTTEN TOP OR HIGH BILLING IN NEWSCASTS. RADIO COMMENTARY HAS CALLED THE RVN'S APRIL 25 PROPOSAL " REALISTIC" AND " JUST," AND SCORNE THE COMMUNISTS FOR BEING " AFRAID" OF FREE AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS (FULL TEXT REPORTED FBIS S-260742).

4. REACTIONS OF SELECTED VIETNAMESE: LOWER HOUSE OPPOSITION LEADER
TRAN VAN TUYEN NOTED THAT THE GVN'S OFFER OF GENERAL ELECTIONS IS THE FIRST PUBLIC INDICATION THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS SOFTENED ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE

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COMMUNISTS HAVE REJECTED THIS PARTICULAR PROPOSAL, IT IS STILL A SIGN OF FLEXIBILITY WHICH OFFERS SOME LONG- TERM HOPE FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION IN THE SOUTH. UPPER HOUSE CHAIRMAN NGUYEN BA CAN STATED THAT THE GVN'S PROPOSAL OFFERS SOME BASIS FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OVER THE LONG HAUL, BUT HE DID NOT CONSIDER THAT IT WOULD HAVE ANY DISCERNIBLE EFFECT IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. STRIKING A FAMILIAR NOTE, HE SAID THAT THE ONLY REAL HOPE FOR A NEGOTIATED

SOLUTION LIES IN THE POSSIBILITY OF US, USSR AND PRC PRESSURE ON HANOI TO TAKE A MORE MODERATE POSITION.

5. PRO- ADMINISTRATION DEPUTY PHAM ANH STATED THAT THE VALUE OF THE GVN INITIATIVE IS THAT IT WILL EXPOSE COMMUNIST INTRANSIGENCE AND SHOW THEM TO BE THE REAL OBSTACLE TO A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. PNM ORGANIZATION COMMISSIONER NGUYEN DINH HUYNH SAID THAT BY BEING MORE FORTHCOMING AND MAKING A MORE CONCRETE PROPOSAL THAN THE COMMUNISTS, THE GVN HAS SCORED POINTS WITH WORLD OPINION AND PROBABLY ENHANCED ITS PRESTIGE ABROAD. HE DID NOT FEEL THAT THE PROPOSAL OFFERED ANY REAL CONCESSIONS ON THE GVN'S PART. HE OPINED THAT DR. KISSINGER WOULD TRY TO PERSUADE THE DRV TO REDUCE MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE RVN (UNDER AN IMPLIED THREAT OF RENEWED US BOMBING) AND MIGHT GET THE OTHER SIDE TO SETTLE DOWN TO A MORE MODERATE LEVEL OF PROTRACTED WARFARE.

6. THE HEAD OF THE LOWER HOUSE OPPOSITION PEOPLES' SOCIETY BLOC, LE DINH DUYNH, SAID THAT THE GVN PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS, SINCE THE TWO SIDES ARE SO DEEPLY DIVIDED NEITHER WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ANY PROPOSAL ACCEPTABLE TO THE OTHER. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL INTERPRET THE CONTINUING PREPARATIONS FOR THE AUGUST SENATE ELECTIONS AS A SIGN THAT THE GVN'S PROPOSAL DOES NOT REPRESENT A SERIOUS NEGOTIATING POSITION. OPPOSITION DEPUTY HO NGOC NHUAN SAID THE GVN MADE THE PROPOSAL IN FULL CONFIDENCE THAT IT CAN CONTROL THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN THE SOUTH AND THEREBY RISKS NOTHING BY AGREEING TO AN ELECTION. NHUAN CRITICIZED THE GVN FOR IMPLYING IN ITS OFFER OF ELECTIONS THAT MERELY HOLDING AN ELECTION MEANS THAT THERE IS A DEMOCRATIC REGIME IN THE SOUTH; IN HIS ESTIMATION THE DESPOTIC NATURE OF THE PRESENT GVN ON ONE SIDE AND THE COMMUNISTS ON THE OTHER MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH TO EXERCISE ANYTHING LIKE FREE CHOICE.

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